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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER AND AF S/E NATSIOS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: MINAWI CONSIDERS WITHDRAWAL FROM DPA

Classified By: P/E Chief E. Whitaker, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Senior Assistant to the President and leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Minni Minawi is considering how to respond to the recent Janjaweed attacks in El Fasher and whether to remain within the framework of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). In a December 6 meeting with AID Mission Director and Poloff, Minawi and his leadership committee emphasized that rumors of an impending SLM or joint SLM/National Redemption Front (NRF) attack on El Fasher were false. When asked if the SLM was preparing to withdraw from the DPA, Minawi said he was considering that option but that he would give the other signatories, including the USG, "ample notice." Minawi may further clarify his intentions during a meeting with ambassadors in Khartoum scheduled for December 7.

¶2. (C) According to Minawi, the Janjaweed in El Fasher are operating with the full support of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) officer corps and are indistinguishable from the Sudanese government's official "border guards." A member of his leadership committee predicted that the expansion of the Janjaweed offensive from Mellit to El Fasher was part of a strategy that would continue to be repeated throughout Darfur and could spread to other major cities such as Nyala. The group also predicted an increase in Janjaweed forces in El Fasher over the coming days. During the meeting, Minawi received a note indicating that Arab militias had surrounded El Fasher, though he said this might be Government misinformation.

¶3. (C) Despite repeated efforts to contact President Bashir and Vice President Ali Osman Taha, Minawi has not been able to speak with them since the security situation deteriorated in El Fasher. There are no indications that the SAF have attempted to prevent Janjaweed attacks in El Fasher. Minawi said that the enlisted SAF troops would move to control the Janjaweed if given orders by their superiors, though such an order was unlikely. One Minawi advisor, however, said that the SAF was weak relative to the Janjaweed and that the forces would need to be re-structured beforehand, which would take time. Minawi faulted the African Union (AU) for not yet providing him with the Sudanese government's plan for the disarmament of the Janjaweed. On December 5, however, the Sudanese government had given him a plan to disarm his own forces.

¶4. (C) Minawi and his advisors speculated as to the Government's strategy for the Janjaweed and provided two explanations: 1) The Sudanese government was using the Janjaweed to secure territory in advance of the 2008 elections and to prevent SLM areas from being used to support an international intervention in Darfur, and 2) Pan-Arab, Islamic ideologues within the Government and the Arab militias were using Darfur as a base to create an "Arab crescent" throughout the Sahel. Minawi disputed the Sudanese

government's claim that any SAF-sponsored action in North Darfur was designed to combat NRF forces, noting that the NRF was not present in South Darfur and yet 45,000 people had been displaced in recent months due to Arab militia attacks.

15. (C) Comment: Normally reticent to directly request assistance, Minawi and his advisors were explicit that vague international pledges and new UN resolutions were now futile. In order to ensure that Minawi remains within the DPA, the international community must give a clear show of support for the SLM/Minawi in the near future. Minawi was encouraged to use his expected meeting with SE Natsios in the next week to articulate his concerns. End comment.
HUME